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POLITICAL IDENTITY AND INTERNATIONAL STATUS ON TAIWAN

SUMMARY REPORT

by
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for
United States Department of State

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POLITICAL IDENTITY AND INTERNATIONAL STATUS ON TAIWAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

LOCAL ELECTORAL OUTCOMES

A victory for democratization? The KMT won 76% of the contests, but the process was more competitive than the outcome, and more civil than its precursors.

A more competitive Kuomintang. Amazingly, the KMT is turning itself into a competitive political party with less reason to fear fair elections.

A conditionally viable Opposition. On KMT sufferance, the moderate Opposition won 12% of the contests and 16% of the vote.

An important independent residual. Non-KMT candidates not affiliated with the Opposition won 12% of the contests with 25% of the vote.

A discriminating electorate. Voters were interested but orderly, many choosing by candidate more than by "party".

POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

A quasi-party system? Two "parties" pursued parallel strategies of selective formal endorsement and selective informal support.

The dominant party. The KMT left more contests "open" to any KMT candidate, though imposing "good government" nominees in some localities.

A loyal Opposition. The Opposition "recommended" a wide array of candidates, but did define some boundaries for itself.

The factional environment. Local factional machines still occupy most localities, to the discomfort of both the Kuomintang and Opposition.

A supportive public. Voters approved the combination of democracy and stability, preferring candidates committed to system norms.

FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS

NATIONALIST POLICY ISSUES

Statist consensus. All "parties" accept the Nationalist state as Taiwan's international persona, but the Opposition wants discussion of foreign policy.

Establishment immobility. The KMT seems not to believe that the Nationalist state or Nationalist foreign policy require significant repair.

Opposition initiatives. The Opposition believes that repairs are needed to maintain the status quo under changing circumstances.

Independent complaints. Independent politicians, many in export businesses, resent the economic costs of Taiwan's ambiguous political status.

Public unease. Less articulately, the general public senses that external political and economic vulnerability jeopardize their personal security.

AMERICAN POLICY DESIDERATA

Monitor all elements. The complexity of views within both KMT and Opposition requires extensive contact with a wide range within all "parties".

Encourage institutional repairs. ROC constitutional mechanisms probably will require repairs and these should be encouraged.

Transfer political technology. The US can facilitate further democratization by helping all "parties" study relevant foreign institutions.

Positive public attention. The US can facilitate further democratization by publicly complimenting success but expecting further improvement.

Private negative cautions. The US should privately convey some standards it hopes will be maintained in any future reassertions of government control.

POLITICAL IDENTITY AND INTERNATIONAL STATUS ON TAIWAN

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POLITICAL IDENTITY AND INTERNATIONAL STATUS ON TAIWAN
SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This SUMMARY REPORT excerpts a longer ANALYTICAL PAPER examining the results of the 14 November 1981 local elections on Taiwan, with particular attention to their potential foreign policy implications. Readers already familiar with the results of the elections and primarily interested in external implications may wish to skip to the second half of this REPORT. Readers interested in assessing alternative explanations of local variation in election outcomes may wish to consult the full-length ANALYTICAL PAPER. Readers interested in more detail on the November 1981 elections, in the relationship between the 1980, 1981 and 1982 elections, or in the relationship between this round of elections and the previous round in 1977, may wish to consult a future REFERENCE AID providing that information.

→ In general, this SUMMARY REPORT treats three themes -- who won? internal implications? external implications? -- in terms of three domestic "parties" -- Kuomintang, Opposition and Independents. Ambiguity and change in the identity of the participating "parties" is a key feature of this election, as of Taiwan electoral politics in general. Therefore the term "party" is used throughout the paper to cover the full range of political groupings from a formally organized political party (the Kuomintang), through a now-incipient but still-prohibited second party (the Opposition), to a residual category of individual politicians who are also "a party to" these contests (the Independents).

The reader may wish to know that the full-length version of the ANALYTICAL PAPER explores three alternative explanations of Taiwan electoral outcomes. In general, the findings are as follows. The rising level of SOCIOECONOMIC MODERNIZATION on Taiwan may help explain why the level of Non-Kuomintang political activity has risen in recent years taking Taiwan as a whole, but it does a poor job of predicting in what particular localities non-Kuomintang candidates will succeed. POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL factors that determine how these local characteristics

find political expression explain much of this local variation, particularly in the elections for provincial assembly. Deviations from these two interpretations, particularly in the elections for local executive, can often be explain in terms of the PERSONAL NETWORKS of candidates or voters.

LOCAL ELECTORAL OUTCOMES

As the accompanying table shows, the bare facts are that, overall, Kuomintang candidates won three-quarters of the seats with two-thirds of the votes, while non-Kuomintang candidates won a quarter of the seats with one-third of the votes.

If we distinguish between the three types of POSITION involved -- local executives, provincial assemblymen and municipal assemblymen -- these results remain basically the same. In terms of SEATS, non-Kuomintang candidates did slightly better in the municipal assemblies (24%) than in the provincial assembly (22%) and local executiveships (21%). In terms of VOTES, non-Kuomintang candidates did best in the local executive races (41%), second best in the municipal assemblies (30%), and least well in the provincial assembly (28%).

If we further distinguish between OPPOSITION and INDEPENDENT candidates, we find that the Opposition accounted for about two-thirds of the non-Kuomintang victories and about half the non-Kuomintang votes, or 12% of all seats and 18% of all votes. Opposition candidates won 3 of 19 (15.8%) of the local executiveships with 20.0% of the vote cast for local executive in all localities, 46.8% of the votes in the seven localities the Opposition contested. Opposition candidates won 11 of 77 (14.3%) of the provincial assembly seats with 13.0% of the votes cast for provincial assembly in all localities, 13.7% of the vote in the sixteen localities they contested. Opposition candidates won 8 of 96 (8.3%) municipal assembly seats with 9.2% of the votes cast for municipal assembly in both Taipei and Kaohsiung, or 14.6% of the vote in the five Taipei urban districts they contested.

NOVEMBER 1981 TAIWAN LOCAL ELECTION
OVERVIEW OF OUTCOMES

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OVERALL	TOTAL	KUOMINTANG	NON KUOMINTANG	OPPOSITION	INDEPENDENTS
CONTESTED					
Candidates			152	37	115
Constituencies	71	71	??	28	??
Localities	49	49	44	21	29
WON					
Seats	189	144	40	22	22
Constituencies	71				
Localities	49	45	24	15	7
Votes (All)	100%	65%	35%	16%	19%
Votes (Contested)	--	67%	--	25%	28%
LOCAL EXECUTIVE					
CONTESTED					
Candidates	54	27*	27	8*	20
Constituencies	19	19	16	7	11
Localities	19	19	16	7	11
WON					
Seats	19	15	4	3	1
Constituencies	19	15	4	3	1
Localities	19	15	4	3	1
Votes (All)	100%	59%	41%	20%	21%
Votes (Contested)	--	59%	--	47%	33%
PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY					
CONTESTED					
Candidates	197	116	81	21	60
Constituencies	31	31	27	18	23
Localities	19	19	18	16	17
WON					
Seats	77	59	18	11	7
Constituencies	31	28	15	10	6
Localities	19	19	13	9	6
Votes (All)	100%	72%	28%	13%	15% ?
Votes (Contested)	--	72%	--	14%	30%
MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY					
CONTESTED					
Candidates	164	102*	62	9	53
Constituencies	21	21	??	?	?
Localities	11	11	11	5	11
WON					
Seats	93	70	23	7	16
Constituencies	21				
Localities	11	11	10	5	10
Votes (All)	100%	70%	30%	9%	21%
Votes (Contested)		70%	--	15%	21%

CONSTITUENCIES include seats reserved for women and aborigines in provincial and municipal assemblies. Totals for LOCALITIES reflect some overlap among components. VOTES show both the percentage won across all localities, and across only those localities that each "party" contested.

Obviously the question posed by these "bare facts" is "who won?". The basic answer, which should not be obscured by more complex analysis, is that the Nationalist Party won. If Taiwan voters had wanted to defeat more Kuomintang candidates they could have done so, but did not. Equally obviously, however, there is more to it than this, raising the question of what standards to bring to bear in any more elaborate evaluation. We shall employ two sets of standards that should con-

A VICTORY FOR DEMOCRATIZATION?

Let us begin by noting the interpretation placed on the "bare facts" by the participants on Taiwan. With much justification, the Kuomintang claimed a landslide victory and a renewal of its mandate as the "ruling party". The Opposition conceded this, but pointed out that even a conservative assessment of Opposition strength (that is, one excluding Independents) showed the Opposition to be a distinct second force. The Independents had no official spokesman, but if there had been one he might have pointed out that although Independents won only half as many seats as the Opposition, they won about as many votes.

All sides (with the likely exception of the jailed Kaohsiung "radicals") hailed the election as a victory, not so much for any particular party, as for a resumption of the process of democratization itself. They referred partly to the something-for-everyone electoral returns, but even more to the civility of the campaign and the placidity of the voting. The more sophisticated observers noted that the turnover of local executives from one party to another in 1977 and 1981 was gradually teaching all "parties" to accept the results of today's contest in order to reform and compete tomorrow.

To this local commentary, we add three observations. First, it is remarkable that political competition made such a robust recovery from the almost total suppression of the Opposition only two years before. Moderate opposition leaders,

careful always to limit both their goals and their tactics to the existing legal framework and current political realities, survived. Second, despite the liveliness of competition, the scope of campaign issues and activities was narrow. The government had locked up all but the moderate opposition it preferred and, by revising the electoral law, had forbidden discussion of all but the local issues it allowed. Third, the Opposition really did not do all that well, and this is probably good for them because they have scared the government less. Nevertheless there may be another round of restrictions after this round of elections.

A MORE COMPETITIVE KUOMINTANG

One of the most striking aspects of the 1981 elections was the emergence of the Kuomintang as a more competitive political party, able to hold its own in the political marketplace with less resort to administrative intervention. A new confidence that the party could not only live with, but even thrive on, political competition was evident in both local executive and provincial assembly elections. Kuomintang candidates ran for all 189 offices in all 71 constituencies. The Nationalist party won 144 of 189 contests (76%) with 65% of the vote. 127 of these winners were formal nominees of the Nationalist party (67% of all seats), while another 17 won contests that the Nationalist party had declared "open" to any of its members (9% of all seats). The Kuomintang maintained its domination of local political office despite the stiffer competition it faced.

Local executive. Contests for the mayors of the three remaining provincial cities and the magistrates of the sixteen counties are the most conspicuous of the three types of elections held. In 1981 the Kuomintang fielded candidates in 18 of 19 localities and captured 15 of 19 positions, 79% of the seats with 59% of the votes. Numerically, the outcome was about the same as in 1977, when the Kuomintang won 16 of the then 20 local executiveships.

Perceptually, however, the outcome was very much more favorable to the Kuomin-

tang. In 1977 the party still maintained its longstanding attitude that it should not lose any local executiveships to Non-Kuomintang candidates. Consequently, as in previous elections, the party used all possible methods to win, generating considerable local tension as a result. Moreover, attention both inside and outside the party focused on its four defeats, and the 1977 results were seen as a dramatic setback. In 1981, in contrast, although campaigning vigorously, the party accepted in advance the likelihood of some defeats. It defined victory as increasing its long-run legitimacy in the eyes of the voters, and evidently let the chips fall where they might. The result was to reduce both local tension and the significance of any defeats.

The Nationalist party lost 3 of the 15 localities in which it won the local executiveship in 1977, but regained 3 of the 4 it had lost in 1977. The five Nationalist incumbents eligible for renomination (having served only one of the two terms allowed) were reelected. The Nationalist party nominated candidates for local executive in 18 of 19 localities and won 15 of these. In general, the total number of candidates seems largely to account for the Kuomintang share of the vote for local executive -- the more candidates the smaller the share for each.

Provincial assembly. Contests for provincial assembly are less conspicuous but still significant indicators of Kuomintang popularity. In 1981 the party captured 59 of 77, 77% of the seats with 72% of the vote.

Whether in terms of incumbencies, endorsements, seats or votes, the picture is one of overwhelming dominance by the Kuomintang. Of 53 seats won in 1977, in 1981 the Kuomintang won 50 and lost 3; of the 32 Kuomintang incumbents who ran again, 29 won and 3 lost. The Kuomintang formally nominated 37 candidates for provincial assembly, of whom 33 won. In general, the Kuomintang lost provincial assembly contests only in large constituencies with several seats, or in the cities. The percentage of the vote achieved by the Kuomintang seems most directly related

to the percentage of the candidates that were Kuomintang members -- the higher the proportion of candidates, the higher the proportion of the vote.

A CONDITIONALLY VIABLE OPPOSITION

A second striking aspect of the 1981 local election was the emergence from the eclectic category of Non-Nationalist politicians of a clearcut Opposition group with some of the attributes of a political party. The Opposition formally "recommended" 30 candidates in 21 of 49 localities (43%) and informally supported 6 candidates in 3 more. In all, the Opposition ran in 28 of 71 constituencies (39%), 28 of 189 races (15%). Opposition candidates won 22 of 189 contests (12%) with 16% of the vote in all localities, or 23% of the votes in the constituencies contested. This was the first election in which one could clearly associate two-thirds of the non-Nationalist seats and half the non-Nationalist votes with a para-party organization with some political goals and some political leadership.

Local executive. In the highly visible local executive elections, the Opposition fielded candidates in 7 of 19 localities and won in 3, or 16% of the posts with 20% of the vote. Opposition optimists can point to the fact that Opposition candidates for local executive won an average of 47% of the vote in those localities they contested. Pessimists can point to the fact that the Opposition lost all the local executiveships it won in 1977, and have uncertain prospects for retaining the new territories they conquered in 1981.

In terms of incumbencies, endorsements, seats and votes, the Opposition record in the local executive contests is at best mixed. It contested only two of the four localities won by Non-Kuomintang candidates in 1977, neither of these with the incumbent as candidate. It nominated candidates in only seven of 19 localities, and won only three of those, in localities where the Nationalist Party was notably in disarray.

These outcomes do raise questions not only about the staying power of the Opposition once it gains office, but also about the explanation of how it gains office in the first place. After their four victories in 1977 Non-Kuomintang politicians argued that they were riding a long-term, island-wide wave of socio-economic modernization -- the higher the level of development of the locality, the more likely it would be to elect Opposition candidates. If this were true, once a locality became modernized enough to elect a non-Kuomintang candidate it should continue to do so thereafter, all the more so as it became still more modernized. Evidently this has not been the case. In fact the Opposition appears to have ridden particular separate local waves of political mobilization in 1977; these waves have since crashed and the Opposition's 1981 candidates in those localities crashed with them. Meanwhile able Opposition candidates whipped up new waves in new localities, none of them particularly developed. To build enduring constituencies is the Opposition's priority task for the future.

Provincial assembly. Contests for provincial assembly were also significant indicators of Opposition popularity. In 1981 the Opposition fielded 21 candidates in 16 of 19 localities and captured 11 of the 77 seats, 14% of the seats with 13% of the vote. This was slightly better than in 1977, when what would now be considered Opposition candidates captured 9 seats.

In terms of incumbencies, endorsements, seats and votes, the Opposition record in provincial assembly contests was somewhat better than in those for local executive. Of the 9 seats won in 1977, in 1981 the Opposition won 7 and lost 2; of 5 incumbents who ran again, 4 were reelected. The Opposition formally "recommended" 15 candidates for provincial assembly, of which 8 won and 7 lost. In addition, Opposition leader K'ang Ning-hsiang extended informal support to 6 other candidates, of whom 3 won. In general, the Opposition won only in multi-seat constituencies where there were few strong independent candidates; most of

these were in the NORTH and SOUTH. Neither political institutionalization nor socioeconomic environment provides a simple explanation for the proportion of the vote received by Opposition candidates; personal networks may well be much of the reason.

AN IMPORTANT INDEPENDENT RESIDUAL

A third striking aspect of the 1981 local election was the number, diversity and strength of Independent candidacies. In some localities Independents competed with Opposition candidates, in some they even seemed to preclude them. Some Independents wished Opposition endorsement but did not meet Opposition criteria, while others wanted connection with the Opposition even less than they wanted it with the Kuomintang. Overall, independent candidates ran in 29 of 49 localities (59%) and won 22 of 189 contests (12%) with 29% of the votes.

Local executive.

Independents contested 11 of the 19 local executiveships, winning 1 (5%) with 21% of the votes cast for local executive in all localities and 33% of the vote in those contested. Independent and Opposition candidacies for local executive overlapped in only two localities (Ilan and Pingdong), and in neither of these was there a serious Independent contender. Independents preempted the Non-Kuomintang field in Tainan and Taichung cities, where they were incumbents. Whether the Independent candidates in other localities -- particularly Keelung City and Tainan, Taichung and Hsinchu counties -- would have accepted Opposition endorsement or were unacceptable to the Opposition requires research.

Provincial assembly. Independent candidates were also quite active in the provincial assembly races. They ran in 17 of 19 localities, winning 7 of 77 (9%) with 15% of the vote cast for provincial assemblyman in all localities, or 30% of the vote in those contested.

Relative to 1977, Independents lost 3 seats in 3 localities (Hsinchu, Changhua and Yunlin) and gained nowhere; however, net figures require further research. (see table, page 30). Relative to reapportionment, Independents retained their one seat in Chiayi despite a decrease of one seat, absorbed the loss of one seat in Yunlin, and lost their one seat in Changhua despite the addition of one seat. In terms of INCUMBENCIES, Independents won 5 of the 9 seats they had captured in 1977, and lost 4. Of the 6 Independent incumbents who ran again, 4 won and 2 lost. Since Independents have no coordinating para-party organization, there are no ENDORSEMENTS or INTERVENTIONS to discuss.

A DISCRIMINATING ELECTORATE

What did the electoral outcomes of the November 1981 election show about the attitudes of the voting public toward the various parties involved? No doubt some voters remain unalterably either loyal or antagonistic to the Kuomintang. However, in general what is striking is the selectivity, not to say fickleness, of the electorate. Localities that voted heavily for the candidates of one "party" in the 1977 election voted heavily against candidates of the same "party" in 1981. Localities that voted heavily for the local executive candidate of one "party" in 1981 voted heavily for the provincial assembly candidates of another at the same time. Such flip-flop and split-ticket voting suggests, as the MODERNIZATION paradigm would predict, that more and more voters are freeing themselves from "mobilized participation" according to habitual loyalties or party discipline and are progressing toward "autonomous participation" in which they decide for themselves.

Although this does appear to be the trend of the times, it is difficult to prove because of the limited number of cases in which both the local executive and provincial assembly races were contested by more than one party. In fact most of the split-ticket voting within the 1981 elections (though not most of

the flip-flops between 1977 and 1981) can be explained by the availability of alternative candidates for one office but not for the other. In other words, it will not be possible really to assess the willingness of voters to split their tickets among "parties" until all "parties" field at least some major candidates in most localities. In the discussion that follows, we focus only on localities that met this criterion in 1981.

POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Whereas the focus of the preceding section was largely on the final outcome of the elections, this section shifts the focus backward to the nomination strategies of which those electoral outcomes were the result. The management of nominations is in many respects a more direct indication than electoral success of the degree of institutionalization of the various "parties" involved, and of the incipient party system as a whole. In any case, discussion of nominations provides us with an opportunity to probe each party's electoral strategies and their consequences.

A COMPETITIVE PARTY SYSTEM?

Though facing the usual difficulties of choosing among too many potential candidates, the Kuomintang succeeded in exercising effective control over its candidates for local executive. It sidestepped the worst difficulties in the provincial assembly nominations by selective formal nominations, combined with selective informal support. The Opposition leader Kang Ning-hsiang, relying on personal persuasion rather than organizational discipline, secured formal agreement on a selective list of Opposition "recommendations", but also lent informal support to several additional candidates on his own. The residual category of "Independents" of course had no mechanism for nominations or recommendations and were spared both the advantages and headaches of this process.

THE DOMINANT PARTY

As noted in the first section on voting returns, for the first time the Kuomintang adopted different nominating strategies as between the local executive and provincial assembly contests. For local executive it "took nominations as the principle", with the "open" contest in Tainan City as the single exception. For provincial assembly the Kuomintang "took no nomination as the principle", officially nominating only those candidates it considered particularly worthy, but offering unofficial "keypoint support" to selected other candidates whose victory the party wanted to ensure.

The Kuomintang's dilemma is that it wants all politicians to join the party, but then does not have enough nominations available to satisfy them. Impatience with this overcrowding is in fact the origin of most 'maverick', Independent and even many Opposition candidacies. The Kuomintang must dissappoint several aspirants for each candidate it supports, creating endless challenges to the fairness of the nomination system, regardless of what procedures are used.

This election's mixed nomination system relieved some of this pressure and helped correct the balance between participation and institutionalization within the Kuomintang. First, where the pressure was worst, by leaving elections "open" the Kuomintang could allow more opportunities for party members to run. Second, where it did make nominations, the party conducted elaborate consultations with local party members to guarantee fairness. Third, however, where such consultation did not produce a suitable candidate, higher party organs imposed a "good government" candidate of their own.

There were complaints about these procedures too, and there may be further reforms. However, the basic reform has already been accomplished, which is that evidently nominations were based on rational criteria and not, as sometimes in the past, backroom bribes. Furthermore, the Kuomintang leadership must retain ultimate control over local nominations -- regardless of straw polls among local

party members -- in order to choose the candidate most likely to win against the particular non-Kuomintang opponents who emerge. Finally, since the Kuomintang is attempting to nudge localities away from "factional machine" and toward "good government" politics, it cannot turn the choice of nominee over to the local factions it is trying to reform.

Although the Kuomintang faced relatively few "maverick" candidacies by members running against party discipline while remaining in the party, it did experience an unprecedented number of resignations by members embarking on independent candidacies. Party officials are searching for institutional mechanisms to prevent this in the future. However, probably the biggest deterrent will be the results of these elections themselves. Virtually all Kuomintang incumbents who were renominated won, while virtually all "maverick" and "resignee" candidates lost.

A LOYAL OPPOSITION

Like the Kuomintang, the Opposition group under the leadership of K'ang Ning-hsiang also experimented with endorsement mechanisms, also used its "recommendations" to draw a line between acceptable and unacceptable candidates, but also in some places accommodated itself to local political reality.

First, although forbidden to organize a formal political party, the Opposition took a long step toward de facto party status by endorsing a selective list of 7 candidates for local executive and 21 for provincial assembly. All of the local executive endorsements and 15 of the provincial assembly endorsements were the result of intense negotiation and consensus among all the local Opposition politicians involved. Support of 6 of the provincial assembly candidates was less formal, evidently the personal decision of Opposition leader K'ang Ning-hsiang, in the absence of local agreement.

Second, the Opposition took a further step toward institutionalization by continuing its attempt to define what constitute the credentials for Opposition recommendation. Excluded were non-Kuomintang figures with poor (particularly if corrupt) records in office, non-Kuomintang figures with too close ties to the Kuomintang, and new entrants to politics with no established performance record or political convictions. Included were established non-Kuomintang politicians of good performance and anti-Kuomintang convictions, and selected new candidates considered promising Opposition talents.

Third, the Opposition did not go as far as some had proposed in the previous election toward demanding ideological orthodoxy from those it supported. Instead the emphasis, both in selection criteria and campaign strategy, was on service to constituents. The Opposition attempted to wean itself from reliance on what Kang called "kamikaze" candidacies relying on mass mobilization through ideological demagoguery.

THE FACTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Since Independents constitute a residual category rather than an incipient party, there is no endorsement process to explore. However, although there is no formal party organization behind Independent candidacies, in many cases Independents are backed by local factional machines. Most candidates with neither party nor factional backing are, perforce, minor ones. There are many questions worth exploring about both the origins and consequences of factional Independent candidacies. On the one hand, their widespread occurrence underlines the still factional nature of the political landscape in most localities. On the other hand, the very proliferation of such candidacies often is their undoing.

Independent candidates ran for local executive in 9 of 21 localities. As the accompanying table shows, they split the vote badly in most cases. Nevertheless the principal Independent candidate did quite well in Taichung and Tainan

counties, and of course won overwhelmingly in Tainan City.

Independents ran for provincial assembly in 16 of 19 localities. Nominally there were 59 independent candidates for 77 slots (a candidate-to-seat ratio of 0.77). However, as the accompanying table shows, many independent candidacies were minor ones -- indeed, they account for most minor candidacies. When the women's contests and minor candidates are eliminated, there remain only 27 major independent candidates for the 77 provincial assembly seats (an overall ratio of 0.35). There was at least one serious independent candidate in 14 localities, more than one in 7 of these. The largest number (4) was in Taichung County, an independent stronghold where both independent incumbents were reelected.

SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC OPINION

Data on the attitude of the electorate toward this campaign and election per se -- as opposed to the individual parties involved -- is sparse.

One small set of hard numbers is the voter turnout for the island as a whole (71%), and for Taiwan province (72%), Taipei City (68%) and Kaohsiung City (77%) taken separately. The approximately comparable figures for 1977 were 80% for Taiwan province (excluding Taipei but including Kaohsiung), and 81% for Kaohsiung City taken by itself. Evidently the electorate was about 8% less interested than in 1977.

Survey researchers on Taiwan may have administered questionnaires to voters about their attitude toward the election, but they are not yet available either. My own impression was that on the whole the electorate displayed interest without being excited and preferred moderation without demanding conformity. Everyone seemed aware that the election was occurring and curious about its outcome, but somewhat reserved, neither dismissing it as futile nonsense nor embracing it as an opportunity to obtain practical changes in their lives. They felt uncomfort-

able about candidates who glorified themselves or vilified their opponents, and preferred candidates who restricted themselves to a combination of laudable platitudes and constructive programs, though preferably with some nuance of personal style that made them distinctively attractive. The public seemed to endorse the combination of democracy and stability that the government had achieved by quashing the more radical Opposition. They preferred candidates who embraced the basic norms of the resulting system, but tolerated candidates who proposed moderate changes through the legal procedures of that system.

NATIONALIST POLICY ISSUES

In the November 1981 local elections foreign policy issues were real but implicit rather than explicit, and the linkages between foreign policy and electoral outcomes were real but indirect rather than direct. These linkages involve the quadrilateral relations among Taiwanese, Nationalists, Communists and Americans, evolving in the context of the other nations of the world. The relevance of these quadrilateral relations to electoral politics can be illustrated by briefly considering three questions. Why are elections held at all on Taiwan? How were the 1981 elections conducted? What international effects might they have?

As for why elections are held at all, it is the Nationalists who conduct them, for a variety of positive and negative reasons involving all sides of the quadrilateral -- Taiwanese demands, Nationalist ideals, Communist competition and American encouragement. Among these reasons, since the early 1970s the balance has shifted from negative toward positive ones, a trend probably accelerated by the 1981 elections.

As for how the 1981 elections were conducted, the shift of American diplomatic recognition from Nationalists to Communists not only temporarily delayed some

elections but also permanently altered the parameters within which all elections on Taiwan are held. Derecognition brought home to both Nationalists and Taiwanese the commonality of their interests and helped consolidate a mood of restraint in which this commonality could find expression. The shift in emphasis from democracy to stability was also affected by United States' downgrading of emphasis on human rights in American foreign policy. Finally, to note one more involvement of the United States in relations between Nationalists and Taiwanese, since 1977 the Nationalists have devoted much effort to isolating the moderate Opposition that remains operative on Taiwan from the "radical" opposition that has gone into exile in the United States.

STATIST CONSENSUS

Among politicians still functioning on Taiwan, virtually all parties concede that for the foreseeable future the Nationalist state -- the Republic of China -- will continue to provide the only realistic vehicle for Taiwan's international political and economic relations. This consensus extends even to such details as Opposition support for Nationalists requests for advanced military equipment from the United States.

Of course, not everyone fully shares this consensus. Some older Opposition politicians continue to recite decades-old anti-Nationalist slogans, without addressing current political realities. "Radical" Opposition leaders jailed on Taiwan cannot make known their positions, if any, on foreign policy issues. However, presumably at least some are closer to Opposition colleagues who have gone into exile than they are to the moderate Opposition still functioning on Taiwan. Some Taiwanese observers say that the ultimate objective of both indigenous and exiled Opposition leaders -- particularly since most of them are Taiwanese -- is "Taiwanese independence", that is, a state that is both separate from the PRC and dominated by Taiwanese.

Whether or not their ultimate goals coincide, the proximate objectives and strategies of exiles and indigenes are quite different, and diverging. It is only the exiles who can afford the luxury of wanting to force the pace of domestic change, the fantasy of expelling mainlanders from Taiwan, and the dream of the early establishment of a Taiwanese political entity. In any case the exiles have become largely politically irrelevant because their "confrontationist" strategy backfired and their dissent from current constitutional arrangements received little public support.

ESTABLISHMENT IMMOBILITY

In foreign policy, perhaps the Kuomintang's leading accomplishment of the November 1981 elections was to keep explicit discussion of international issues out of the election campaign, thereby temporarily retaining its monopoly on foreign policy decisions. This outcome was the result partly of the restrictive election law and partly of the Kuomintang's aloof posture.

The election law says that candidates may only discuss issues relevant to the offices for which they are running. In the December 1980 elections for national-level representatives, a few Opposition candidates raised foreign policy issues and were quashed by election supervisors. In the November 1981 elections for essentially "provincial" offices, foreign policy issues were doubly irrelevant and Opposition candidates doubly afraid to raise them. In the January 1982 elections for strictly "local" offices, foreign policy issues were still less relevant and the candidates still less equipped to speak on them.

Besides, the "national" government -- not to say the President and a few of his closest advisors -- have reserved to themselves the right to make, and even to discuss, foreign policy. In the underlying constitutional theory of the Kuomintang, it is pre-49 national events, not post-49 local elections that provide the domestic -- and even more so the international -- legitimacy of the Nationalist

regime on Taiwan. Accordingly, the Kuomintang's posture is that neither the procedures nor the substance of Nationalist foreign policy will be affected by local elections, regardless of their outcomes.

However, potentially this aloofness may contribute as much to the flexibility as to the immobility of Nationalist foreign policy. With the best will in the world, it is difficult for the Nationalists to alter any part of their foreign policy formulations. On the one hand, they must avoid undermining any of the premises from which they ward off opponents' arguments, particularly the Opposition. On the other hand, they must avoid alarming other participants, particularly Opposition politicians fearful of a Nationalist sellout to the PRC.

OPPOSITION INITIATIVES

The Opposition explicitly raised virtually no foreign policy issues during the 1981 campaign. There are at least three reasons for this. First, as noted above, foreign policy issues were not legally relevant to the campaign, pointed discussion of many foreign policy issues is illegal in any case, and after previous repression no Opposition candidates risked raising them. Second, few Opposition politicians have thought much about foreign policy issues and, to the extent that they have, remain in the preliminary stages of reconciling their diverse views into a consensus Opposition foreign policy line. Third, Opposition leaders have believed that they should increase their numbers of central political representatives and local political incumbents before launching any major foreign policy debates.

Nevertheless, for these same reasons, the 1980-1982 round of elections probably marks the end of this public silence on foreign policy issues by the Opposition. First, the legal constraints are not total, and indirect reference to foreign policy issues has already begun. Significantly, the election eve issue of Kang's journal The eighties contained an editorial calling for more open dis-

cussion of "the future of Taiwan". Opposition leaders note that even some Nationalists publicly concede that mistakes have been made in foreign policy (notably the ROC's decision to withdraw from the United Nations). Foreign policy can be more effective in the future, the Opposition argues, if there is broader discussion of the options before decisions are made.

Second, more Opposition politicians have begun to discuss foreign policy issues among themselves and to develop more sophisticated positions. In the event of any external crisis, Opposition leaders believe these discussion could be rapidly expanded to include a broader public. Third, by the end of this round of elections, the Opposition's political base at national, provincial and local levels should be sufficiently reconsolidated to permit tentative probes of the foreign policy issue area.

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS

Along with the consciously constituted Opposition, Independent politicians complain about Nationalist conduct of foreign policy, though mostly in private. Oddly, the dissatisfaction is not with the existing political formula of the Republic of China, but rather with what is perceived as weakness on the part of the Nationalist government in defending the interests of ROC citizens against other governments. The most vehement private critics are otherwise apolitical Taiwanese businessmen who feel they are carrying the brunt of Taiwan's live-or-die export drive, but whose lack of internationally accepted passports and visas causes them great personal inconvenience and financial loss. In addition, they accuse the government of failing to adopt effective measures to support Taiwanese businessmen in increasing exports, despite government claims to have done so. These issues are particularly salient to the new generation of recent Independent entrants to politics. Although they are "local" politicians, many are "inter-

national" businessmen because of their involvement in export trade. Rightly or wrongly, few give past government policy much credit for Taiwan's export success.

PUBLIC UNEASE

The majority of public opinion probably remains agnostic on foreign policy issues, vaguely uneasy about the present situation but devoid of any constructive alternative. However, any difficulties in Taiwan's external economic relations quickly impact upon the population at large, and the suspicion is not far from the surface of the public mind that there is some connection between Taiwan's increasing international political isolation and its increasing foreign economic problems. Such issues are given particular point at the moment by the severe recession that gripped many sectors of the Taiwan economy in 1981. Both Opposition and Independent politicians insist that, despite the lack of open discussion of foreign policy, unease over these issues contributed substantially to the receptivity of the electorate to non-Kuomintang candidacies of all kinds.

Perhaps the most important point to make about the 1981 local elections as a plebiscite on Taiwan's international diplomatic status is a negative one. Neither side -- Nationalists or Opposition -- can claim anything as a result. It was the Kuomintang's own insistence that these local elections not be a referendum on national or international issues, and it would be imprudent to regard them as such. Strictly speaking, all they show is who local people will support for local offices. The Kuomintang can rightly claim that most such choices were Nationalist party members. On the other hand, most local politicians are Nationalist party members, because in a one party system the Kuomintang is the principal route to local office.

AMERICAN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The following short list of desiderata for the conduct of American policy emerged from the research for this report.

MONITOR ALL ELEMENTS

The spectrum of opinion on "the future of Taiwan" within both Kuomintang and Opposition is complex, and could evolve rapidly in response to changes in external situation. Therefore it is desirable to keep in close touch with diverse elements of all "parties", not simply establishment explanations of the official Nationalist line. The factor mentioned most frequently by all "parties" that could precipitate "agonizing reappraisals" of foreign policy on Taiwan is perception of any further deterioration of United States' support.

ENCOURAGE MAINTENANCE REPAIRS

As noted above, both the Kuomintang and moderate Opposition seem pretty much in agreement on the desirability of maintaining the current constitutional definition of the Republic of China, its current defense capabilities, and its current attitude toward the PRC. What younger people in both the Kuomintang and Opposition privately question is whether the Nationalist state can in fact be maintained without being reformed. As the last of the mainland-elected national legislators die, redefinition of the formal mechanisms for constituting a legitimate government will be essential.

TRANSFER POLITICAL TECHNOLOGY

Much of the impetus for introducing new political skills by both the Opposition and the Kuomintang has always come from contact with the United States. Still, the extent of exposure to western electoral practices on the part of middle-echelon younger people actually running campaigns remains surprisingly limited, in terms of numbers of people, length of exposure and depth of topics. The American government can make a significant contribution to the continuing democratization of local politics on Taiwan by facilitating short-term study of such institutions abroad.

POSITIVE PUBLIC ATTENTION

Much of the impetus for the democratization of politics on Taiwan has also come from the United States. The uneven progress to date has not been an automatic byproduct of socioeconomic development, nor will further progress in the future. Consequently American encouragement for liberalization by the Nationalists and moderation by the Opposition will continue to be important. Discrete but public congratulations on recent success should contain implicit expectations of further democratization. Favorable American, Japanese and other public opinion remains an important inducement.

PRIVATE NEGATIVE CAUTIONS

There is some danger of a post-election retrenchment in political liberalization and considerable likelihood in the future of periodic reassertions of government control. While these need not necessarily be unconstructive, the American government should quietly reiterate in advance the standards of human rights that it hopes will be maintained. Long unsolved political murders are one cause for concern, reprisals against losing Opposition candidates is another. As for the future, the moderate Opposition must be allowed to continue to develop toward para-party formal organization.

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